



The Cambridge Modern History Volume 04

The Cambridge Modern History is a universal history covering the period from 1450 to 1910. It was published in 14 volumes between 1902 and 1912. The series was planned by Lord Acton, who intended it to be a monument of objective, collaborative scholarship, and edited by A.W. Ward, G. W. Prothero and Stanley Leathes.

From the Preface: "The great European conflict which gives its name to the present volume of our History had a complicated origin, an unprecedented range, and far-reaching consequences. [...] After the War had broken out, not in the west but in an eastern border-land of the Empire, it gradually absorbed into itself all the local wars of Europe. [...] The vicissitudes of the Continental conflict here narrated were so many and so tremendous as constantly to transform the designs of the belligerent Powers, and often to modify materially the purposes of the personages most actively concerned in the course of affairs. It thus frequently becomes difficult to judge the chief actors on the scene with either consistency or equity. [...] The effects of the great European war call for no less attentive a study. The settlement of the Peace of Westphalia remained for more than a century and a half the norm of the international relations of the European States, and governed the *status Imperii* and that of its members [...] The temporary ascendancy of Sweden in northern Europe, gained by her sword and by it to be maintained or jeopardised; the enduring control over the political life of Western Europe at large, and even over parts of the Empire itself, secured to the French monarchy by the far-sighted policy of Richelieu, and of his disciple Mazarin ; the slow but sure decay of Spain; the transfer of colonial power from her and Portugal to the United Provinces and England; the extraordinary prosperity of those Provinces and the consequent jealousy between them and their only Protestant rival; finally the downfall of the political influence of the Papacy, and the beginnings of a new era of religious thought to which the master-mind of Descartes pointed the way—all these historical phenomena are associated with the course and issue of the War, and may, in a wider or in a narrower sense, be reckoned among its consequences." - Summary by Kazbek

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